



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Croco-Doco-Dile Playgroup
The Old Clinic
Llanidloes Primary School
Llangurig Road
Llanidloes
Powys
SY18 6EX**

Date of inspection: February 2018

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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Context

Croco Doco Dile Playgroup serves the town of Llanidloes and the surrounding villages. The setting meets for morning and afternoon sessions in the grounds of Llanidloes Primary School. There are three experienced members of staff.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 30 children per session and children are admitted from the age of three years. There are currently 54 children on roll. At the time of the inspection there were 15 three and four-year-olds present, all of whom are funded for education by Powys local authority.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW) in May 2017. The setting was last inspected by Estyn in February 2013.

Summary

The setting's current performance	Good
The setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- Most children make good progress from their starting points
- Most children develop their communication and numeracy skills well
- Many children develop good information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- Children enjoy the activities and concentrate well
- Practitioners have high expectations of what children can achieve and a good understanding of foundation phase requirements
- There is a happy calm ethos in the setting and the learning environment is well resourced and organised

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting is well led and practitioners work well together as a team
- All staff are enthusiastic and provide clear vision and direction for the setting
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning has a positive impact on the quality of the provision
- Resources are organised effectively and used well to support children's learning
- The management team knows the setting well and has a clear commitment to continuous improvement
- The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children in their learning

Recommendations

R1 Plan to raise children's awareness of other cultures

R2 Develop links with the local community to enrich children's learning

R3 Ensure that planning systematically develops children's skills in all sessions

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Most children make effective progress from their different starting points and develop a good range of skills across the curriculum. They acquire new knowledge readily and recall previous learning well. For example, children talked enthusiastically about painting the dough foods in their role play.

Most children develop their speaking and listening skills well and communicate clearly. They talk spontaneously during their play, such as when they pretend to feed a baby, and contribute to discussions confidently. Many ask purposeful questions and use appropriate vocabulary, for example when paying for items in the class café. Many children initiate simple conversations confidently, such as when discussing their dough models with an adult and when writing. A majority recognise their own name as they self-register and join in with familiar songs and rhymes. They listen well to stories, showing interest and understanding through questions and comments they make about characters and events.

Most children are developing number skills well. They count to ten accurately during daily routines, such as finding out how many children are at playgroup and when they count cups at snack time. A majority demonstrate an awareness of numbers around them and they readily count during their play, such as counting coins as they play in the role play area. They are beginning to develop an understanding of size and use a tape measure to measure a tower they have built. Many children use appropriate mathematical language in their play, such as to identify different sized foods and animals.

Many children are skilful in using a range of ICT. They use a tablet computer independently, they press buttons and switches with control and accuracy, such as when making and listening to recordings.

Most children are developing good physical skills. They run, stamp and march and use tools effectively and accurately, such as when cutting card and dough. They are beginning to develop problem-solving skills. For example, they wear oven gloves when getting a pretend dish out of the oven.

Progress from their starting point in learning Welsh is good for most children. Many children are beginning to use familiar Welsh words and phrases during structured sessions, such as answering the register and joining in with daily songs. Many children count by rote to ten and a few use Welsh counting skills in their play, for example counting candles on a birthday cake using dough.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enjoy their time at the setting and they are enthusiastic when they arrive. They enter happily and quickly settle into daily routines. They are confident and enthusiastic and make clear choices about the activities they choose to participate in. Most concentrate well on their tasks and they persevere for reasonable periods of time when playing, for example when cutting and sticking paper to create a daffodil picture. They play together well and show consideration for each other, taking turns and sharing equipment appropriately. Most children take pleasure in talking about what they have played and what they have done.

Most children develop good relationships with each other and with staff. Nearly all understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods and talk confidently about their snacks. Nearly all children demonstrate good self-help skills, such as putting on their outdoor clothing, shoes, boots and pouring their own drinks from a jug. A few children are spontaneously courteous, independently saying sorry when required.

Many children talk with increasing confidence and are developing their role in making decisions in the setting well. For example, they contribute ideas for what they want to learn at the beginning of topics and how they want their areas arranged.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners plan worthwhile experiences that ensure the children enjoy their learning. As a result, children acquire new knowledge and skills across all areas of learning proficiently. Activities are engaging and build steadily on what children know, can do and understand. There are plenty of beneficial opportunities for children to make decisions and initiate their own play. Planning is purposeful and takes appropriate account of children's varying interests and starting points. As a result, learning experiences meet the requirements of the foundation phase curriculum well.

Practitioners provide children with useful opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all areas of learning. The setting provides daily opportunities for children to recognise their names and to experiment with mark making and letter formation. Practitioners encourage children to take an interest in English and Welsh books in a comfortable reading area. Relevant books are available across the setting, such as factual books about flowers where the children make daffodil pictures. Practitioners promote children's speaking and listening skills well through daily routines and in their indoor and outdoor play.

The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. Practitioners provide a beneficial range of different play opportunities that enable children to use mathematical tools and develop mathematical concepts well.

Children have regular opportunities to count objects, and to recognise numbers and numerals, such as using menus, money and price lists.

The setting provides useful opportunities to promote children's ICT skills and these form a natural part of everyday learning. Practitioners encourage the children to handle ICT resources appropriately and purposefully during their play, such as filming each other creating snow angels on the school field. Practitioners use the setting's outdoor area well to develop children's interests and respect for the environment. For example, they look at bugs in the bug hotel and plant a range of different flowers.

The provision to develop children's Welsh language skills is good. Practitioners use Welsh songs, model simple Welsh phrases, ask questions and use Welsh vocabulary around the setting regularly. There are appropriate opportunities for children to learn about living in Wales and Welsh culture. For example, children celebrate Dydd Santes Dwynwen and St David's Day by dressing up and handling Welsh resources such as Welsh flags and daffodils. However, in general there are not enough opportunities for children to develop their awareness of other cultures.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners understand the ethos and aims of the foundation phase and work well as a team to support children's learning effectively. They provide a range of appropriate opportunities for children to learn through first hand engaging experiences. Practitioners provide a suitable balance between adult-led and child-led activities and respond well to children's interests. For example, practitioners ask children for ideas about what they would like to learn about characters in a story book and how to arrange their construction room. Practitioners manage learning and behaviour successfully through positive praise and sensitive encouragement.

As a team, practitioners work well together and manage children's behaviour effectively. All practitioners use Welsh phrases effectively to praise positive behaviour. They meet regularly to evaluate how well children are making progress and plan to suit the children's needs and interests. Practitioners are good language role models and use a range of teaching strategies effectively, such as modelling play in the role play area. They use questioning skilfully to assess children's understanding and to develop their thinking skills, such as when they talk about putting candles on a cake.

Practitioners assess children's progress regularly and evaluate understanding through planned observations during play activities. They use this information well to compile individual records and practitioners use this to plan to meet children's individual needs. However, this does not assess children's involvement in activities on a daily basis. Practitioners keep parents well informed about their child's achievements, wellbeing and development through regular informal contacts and a written report provided at the end of a child's time at the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes health and wellbeing successfully. There are useful policies and procedures to promote this aspect and the setting places a strong emphasis on outdoor learning, such as water play and digging in mud. The setting provides worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their physical skills, through lively movement sessions where children dance and move around to a range of music. The setting provides children with healthy drinks and encourages children to eat healthy snacks.

Practitioners welcome the children into the setting and they enjoy a well-structured routine that teaches them to take turns and co-operate well. They encourage children to take part in all activities confidently and join in with spontaneous conversations about their play. This creates a positive ethos where children feel valued and secure.

Children begin to learn about sustainability when they recycle paper and food waste. Practitioners develop children's natural curiosity about the world around them when they study their bug hotel, plant flowers and explore falling snow.

The setting has successful arrangements to identify children with additional learning needs. Practitioners work successfully with outside agencies and parents, reviewing progress regularly and appropriately.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners create a safe, inclusive and stimulating environment where children feel secure and valued. There is a happy, caring ethos and all children are treated fairly and equally. They have access to a range of interesting resources that sustain children's interests, for example challenge activities in the construction area and real-life resources in the role-play area.

Both indoor and outdoor areas are well maintained. The outdoor area is interesting and attractive with a range of good quality learning experiences including opportunities for den building, mark making, and play using guttering, buckets and water. The indoor provision is spacious and well laid out. Practitioners organise all space available into interesting areas of learning, providing a valuable environment where children enjoy learning, including construction, role-play, reading and creative play. The setting has a good range of ICT resources, which are well matched to children's learning needs, such as electronic trucks, tablet computers, a compact disc player and computers, and children are able to access these during their play. Children's work is displayed effectively to celebrate learning, for example ICT pictures of children's favourite foods, represented as a graph, and a visual daily timetable.

Planned visits to the local area to develop children's understanding of the world around them include links with the home for the elderly. However, these links are not developed sufficiently to enrich children's learning experiences of the wider community.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

Leaders have a very clear vision to provide effective early years education for young children and share this successfully with all staff and parents. Leaders ensure that all practitioners feel valued and set high expectations for themselves and others.

Leaders work together effectively and share responsibilities well, providing a happy and stimulating environment where children learn to grow and are well prepared to start the next stage of their education.

Practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities well. There are sound processes to manage the performance of staff and these focus appropriately on improving outcomes for children. Through regular staff meetings, all practitioners are well informed and they adapt the provision to respond to children's needs effectively.

There are effective performance management procedures that include all practitioners. Through annual appraisal meetings and reviews leaders identify personal training needs and agree targets with practitioners to help them improve their practice. They provide valuable support through discussions and suggestions and this helps practitioners to develop their skills and meet their professional needs.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has useful systems to evaluate its performance and to prioritise improvements systematically. All practitioners contribute effectively to the self-evaluation process. They know the setting's strengths and identify suitable areas for improvement, such as increasing the use of daily opportunities for music and visits to the local community.

The setting's self-evaluation report is comprehensive and focuses appropriately on children's outcomes. Practitioners promote national priorities appropriately, such as outdoor learning and developing children's Welsh language skills.

Leaders review the impact of changes and initiatives regularly to make sure that these are effective. For example, they monitor the effectiveness of different areas within the provision. Practitioners reflect conscientiously on what is working well and discuss how to make any appropriate changes in order to engage all learners, for example changing the reading area to enable children to share books and stories effectively. The setting responds well to advice from the local authority advisory teacher in order to improve standards and provision, such as improving opportunities to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a good range of effective partnerships that benefit the children well. Positive links with the local primary school help develop children's confidence before they move on to the next stage in their learning. For example, children become familiar with the environment and with similar resources. Leaders benefit from effective links with other agencies that offer support and guidance about children's additional learning needs, which they implement successfully.

There are strong links with parents. Practitioners communicate well with them, for example through social media and regular newsletters. There are frequent opportunities for parents to receive useful information about their child's progress. For example, practitioners are available to talk with parents at the start of each session. Parents receive a good range of information through an induction pack and they gain valuable information from a written report at the end of their child's time at the setting. There are established arrangements for children's induction into the setting with flexible, informal visits, enabling them to settle quickly.

The setting uses occasional visits from the local community to support children's learning, for example a visit from the local police service. However, these visits do not currently contribute to children's learning on a regular basis.

Resource management: Good

The setting has enough suitably qualified and experienced practitioners for the number of children. Staff are deployed effectively and good use is made of their skills and training experiences. All practitioners access a range of helpful training opportunities regularly to improve their knowledge and the children's learning opportunities. For example, recent training has helped practitioners to use their skills to develop more opportunities for speaking and listening activities. Practitioners have visited other settings in the local authority to view good practice. This has led to improvements in confidence to develop opportunities for music that contribute positively to children's wellbeing and learning.

The newly formed management committee is supportive and has oversight of the setting's resources. They ensure the setting has plenty of good quality resources, such as number tiles and suits to wear in the outdoor area, this supports the delivery of the foundation phase well. The management committee has a good understanding of the budget and spending decisions are in line with targets in the setting's improvement plan.

In view of the positive outcomes for children and the quality of the provision, the setting provides good value for money.

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CIW	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<p>This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
Foundation Phase	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from three to seven years of age</p>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<p>A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh</p>
Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education